

Problems arise with Contra aid

By Jack Ryan

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SAN JOSE, Costa Rica — Part of the \$27 million in humanitarian aid for the Nicaraguan resistance forces appropriated by Congress last July has reached the guerrilla fighters, but problems have arisen with later shipments, said Contra leaders.

"Some of the aid has gotten through to our men," Adolfo Calero, director of the Nicaraguan Democratic Front (FDN), said in a telephone interview with The Washington Times. "But, you know, after the aid leaves the United States it becomes a clandestine operation. And all clandestine operations have their problems. We are working on those problems."

Mr. Calero said he could not elaborate on what those problems might be. "That is not for me to say. We are exiles in that country [Honduras]. We are their guests."

Honduras has never officially acknowledged the presence of the FDN and other Contra groups fighting to overthrow the Sandinista regime from bases along the country's frontier.

According to several sources in Honduras, the Honduran armed forces have decided to hold up shipments of food, clothing and medical supplies to pressure the United States for increased military aid.

"I guess you could call it blackmail," a Honduran professional who maintains close contact with the Contra leadership told The Washington Times.

The source said it would be difficult, if not impossible, to land the supplies at any Honduran airstrip without approval of the military.

According to embassy figures, the United States has committed \$61 million in military aid to Honduras for fiscal year 1985, down nearly 20 percent from the previous year.

Despite the problem with the humanitarian aid, the sources said, the Honduran military sees the Contras as a "first line of defense against the Sandinistas" and will continue to support them.

The Reagan administration has designated the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) as the organization to distribute the humanitarian aid.

Alfonso Robelo, who directs the UNO together with Mr. Calero and Dr. Arturo Cruz, told The Washington Times, "I acknowledge that we do have problems [receiving the aid]. We are trying to solve them."

In a recent interview with UPI, Dr. Cruz said the rebels had received \$5 million of the humanitarian aid. He refused to say how the aid arrived but noted that the FDN also maintains a front along the Costa Rican border with Nicaragua and that the country has two maritime coasts.